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at present to be able to draw a line, and say that at the tropic of Cancer, or at a line north of it, the pasturing of sheep stops and ceases to be profitable. The most that can be said is this—he was citing the opinion of Mr. Brodril, quoted by Sir Roderick Murchison in his Annual Address—that sheep do most distinctly thrive which go northwards from Queensland to the tropics: not in the equatorial tropics, but in the less typically tropical regions on the north side of the tropic of Cancer. But the weight of the fleece does undergo diminution, and it has been found necessary to import fresh rams every two years from the temperate regions of Australia, in order to perpetuate the breed and enable it to produce wool at anything like a satisfactory profit. Still, if that can be done, it is so far an argument in favour of this gradual and tentative extension of sheep-breeding from Queensland northward. He wanted to point out the difference between that and the sheep which are transported, *per saltum*, by a long sea-voyage from south to north; and that, in this way, it is perfectly possible to reconcile the conflicting statements they had heard. He wished, finally, to explain that the new establishment at Cape York is neither an agricultural nor a pastoral settlement, but is founded by the Government of Queensland, in conjunction with the Home Government, chiefly as a harbour of refuge in connection with the navigation of Torres Straits.

Sixth Meeting, 12th February, 1866.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*E. Bouter, Esq. ; R. B. Byass, Esq. ; S. Canning, Esq. ; O. J. Crawfurd, Esq. ; John King, Esq. ; Lieut. H. Morland ; J. H. Murchison, Esq. ; Alex. Ramsay, Esq. ; J. E. Saunders, Esq. ; H. T. Sharp, Esq. ; Rev. T. Wiltshire, M.A.*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY SINCE THE LAST MEETING, 22ND JAN., 1866.—Portrait of the late Sir John Barrow, Bart., F.R.S., &c. ; presented by John Barrow, Esq., F.R.S., &c. ‘A Visit to the Plateau of Gusakan,’ by Lieut.-Colonel L. Pelly. ‘A Journey between Bushire and Shiraz,’ by Lieut.-Colonel L. Pelly. ‘Memoir on the Gorilla,’ by R. Owen, D.C.L., F.R.S., &c. All presented by their respective authors. ‘Asia,’ the first part; being an accurate description of Persia, by J. Ogilbie; presented by John Power, Esq., F.R.G.S. ‘Notes of a Trip from Shanghai to Ningpo, *via* Loochow and Hangchow,’ by C. Jamieson, Esq.; presented by Colonel Sykes, M.P., F.R.S. ‘Gulielmi Pisonis de Indiae utriusque Naturali et Medica;’ presented by S. M. Drach, Esq., F.R.G.S. Continuations of Journals, Periodicals, &c.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM SINCE THE LAST MEETING.—Map of Mauritius, or Isle of France; presented by Lieutenant Oliver, R.A. Chart of the Nicobar Islands, by Commodore B. v. Wüllerstorff-Urbair, of the *Novara*, Austrian frigate. An Atlas of the States of the Columbian Republic, by A. Codazzi; also a Map of the same Republic and a Map of the River Magdalena; presented by Grand-General T. C. de Mosquera, President of the United States of

Columbia. Nine sheets of the Topographical Map of Sweden, by Major-General J. A. Hazelius, chief of the Royal Topographical Corps of Sweden; presented through the same (2 copies). Admiralty Charts, 13 sheets. Ordnance Maps, 140 sheets.

The PRESIDENT said the subject of the paper about to be read was one that had excited great interest in Germany, and he was sure that it would do so in England. It was an account of the calamitous termination of the Baron C. von der Decken's expedition on the River Juba, on the east coast of Africa. It was well known that the Baron had devoted a great part of his private fortune to the equipment of his expedition, and that it was his intention to ascend this almost unknown river as far as practicable in his two steamers, and then to cross Africa towards the eastern affluents of the Nile. The Baron C. von der Decken had previously distinguished himself as an explorer in penetrating to Kilimandjaro, and proving the existence of snow-capped mountains in Equatorial Africa, for which great feat he had received the Gold Medal of the Society. He had on the present expedition provided himself with two iron steamers, which were taken out from Hamburg, in sections, in a ship to Zanzibar. At Zanzibar he employed seven months in organising his party, and the services of our naval squadron on the African station were placed at his disposal by direction of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Somerset, who, as well as the Geographical Society, had taken the greatest interest in the success of the expedition. Colonel Playfair, our Consul at Zanzibar, who was now in England on leave of absence on account of his health, and present on this occasion, would tell them how well the expedition was provided for its purpose. The naval officer whom the Baron placed in command of his vessels was selected from the Austrian service, and there was attached to the expedition a medical officer and botanist, an artist, European workmen—in short everything was done to ensure success. The Baron lost his small steamer at the mouth of the Juba, and one of his party, a European, perished with it. The large steamer fortunately passed the bar, and ascended the Juba—a river that has never before been ascended by Europeans—a distance of 380 miles. It then struck on a reef, and was obliged to be unloaded, the Baron proceeding to take measures for the safety of his people and his vessel. Taking Dr. Link, one of his party, with him, he redescended to Berdera, a town on the banks of the river which he had passed on his way up, with the view of obtaining assistance. In the mean time, the party he had left behind, under command of Lieutenant von Schickh, were attacked by a large party of the natives. Fearing for the safety of his chief, M. von Schickh descended the river as quickly as possible in the only boat that was left, in the hope of finding Arab vessels at the mouth of the Juba to take them to Zanzibar, a distance of 350 miles, there to procure assistance for the relief of his chief. This he accomplished, and, in addition to the efforts made by him, it appears that a ship in Her Majesty's service had proceeded in the direction of the Juba with the view of affording all the aid they could to M. von Schickh in his search for his associates. The first news he (the President) had of this disaster was in a letter from Baron Jules de Decken, brother of Baron Charles, on the 31st of last month, and he of course felt it his duty to go at once to the Admiralty to ensure that additional succour would be afforded. The Baron Charles von der Decken, he ought to explain, was entirely under British protection; but our Consul being on leave of absence, and his deputy being unwell, the accounts have come to us through Germany; the Hanseatic Consul at Zanzibar having forwarded the news. In Prussia the disaster has excited the most intense interest, as the Society had learnt through one of its associates, Colonel Beauchamp Walker, who had been the medium of forwarding copies of the documents from the Princess Pless, mother of the Baron. The

Meeting was fortunate in having present Colonel Playfair, Consul, and Colonel Rigby, our former Consul at Zanzibar, who were both well acquainted with the natives and with the languages on the Somâli coast between Aden and Zanzibar, and could give their views of the probable chances of escape of the Baron and Dr. Link.

COLONEL RIGBY then read the following:—

1. *Report on the Disasters that have happened to the Expedition of the Baron Charles von der Decken.* By Lieutenant the Chevalier von SCHICKH.

(Communicated by the PRINCESS VON PLESS, through Col. BEAUCHAMP WALKER.)*

THE report which the Chevalier von Schickh laid before the Hanseatic Consul commenced with a few short extracts from the journal of the Baron himself, giving the dates of arrival at the different villages on the banks of the river, and describing the accident which brought the voyage of the steamer to a termination a little beyond the town of Berdera. The extracts commence on August 16th, the day after the expedition entered the Juba. Nothing of importance appears to have happened until they arrived at Berdera. The journal of the Baron then proceeds as follows:—

“ About 11 A.M. we passed close to Berdera. Abdio, the two Barakas, and Kero landed to go up to the town, which is somewhat higher on the left bank, in order to procure provisions and deliver the letters of introduction that we had brought. About five o'clock, happily free, I proceeded with Link in the boat to inspect the stream; the steamer followed slowly. On the right bank, at the town,† I was challenged to stop. As there was no good house, I proceeded about 1000 paces further up to the first town on the left bank. Abdio and his associates stood on the shore, but I declined to avail myself of the anchorage pointed out by them opposite the town, as we should there be too much commanded by the hills. Accordingly, we cast anchor close to the exterior walls, exactly opposite the watering-place, where the ground was flat. Groups of inquisitive people remained on both sides of the river, even during the night.

“ 20th.—Abdio and suite came on board about half-past seven. They had not procured any provisions, but they brought the evidently false intelligence that at only two hours' distance from Berdera the Juba has a great cataract, and that the people of Berdera and Gumana are at war. He is a very useless creature, yielding to every native rumour, and is cowardly beyond measure.

* Translated by S. M. Drach, Esq., F.R.G.S.

† There are two towns at this place, separated by the river.—ED.